

§ 1.931

38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–10 Edition)

loan program, regardless of the amount of the debt.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501, 3720)
[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.931 Bases for compromise.

(a) VA may compromise a debt if it cannot collect the full amount because:

(1) The debtor is unable to pay the full amount in a reasonable time, as verified through credit reports or other financial information;

(2) VA is unable to collect the debt in full within a reasonable time by enforced collection proceedings;

(3) The cost of collecting the debt does not justify the enforced collection of the full amount; or

(4) There is significant doubt concerning VA's ability to prove its case in court.

(b) In determining the debtor's inability to pay, VA will consider relevant factors such as the following:

(1) Age and health of the debtor;

(2) Present and potential income;

(3) Inheritance prospects;

(4) The possibility that assets have been concealed or improperly transferred by the debtor; and

(5) The availability of assets or income that may be realized by enforced collection proceedings.

(c) VA will verify the debtor's claim of inability to pay by using a credit report and other financial information as provided in paragraph (g) of this section. VA should consider the applicable exemptions available to the debtor under State and Federal law in determining the ability to enforce collection. VA also may consider uncertainty as to the price that collateral or other property will bring at a forced sale in determining the ability to enforce collection. A compromise effected under this section should be for an amount that bears a reasonable relation to the amount that can be recovered by enforced collection procedures, with regard to the exemptions available to the debtor and the time that collection will take.

(d) If there is significant doubt concerning VA's ability to prove its case in court for the full amount claimed, either because of the legal issues involved or because of a bona fide dispute

as to the facts, then the amount accepted in compromise of such cases should fairly reflect the probabilities of successful prosecution to judgment, with due regard given to the availability of witnesses and other evidentiary support for VA's claim. In determining the risks involved in litigation, VA will consider the probable amount of court costs and attorney fees pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S.C. 2412, that may be imposed against the Government if it is unsuccessful in litigation.

(e) VA may compromise a debt if the cost of collecting the debt does not justify the enforced collection of the full amount. The amount accepted in compromise in such cases may reflect an appropriate discount for the administrative and litigative costs of collection, with consideration given to the time it will take to effect collection. Collection costs may be a substantial factor in the settlement of small debts. In determining whether the cost of collecting justifies enforced collection of the full amount, VA will consider whether continued collection of the debt, regardless of cost, is necessary to further an enforcement principle.

(f) VA generally will not accept compromises payable in installments. If, however, payment of a compromise in installments is necessary, VA will obtain a legally enforceable written agreement providing that, in the event of default, the full original principal balance of the debt prior to compromise, less sums paid thereon, is reinstated. Whenever possible, VA will also obtain security for repayment.

(g) To assess the merits of a compromise offer based in whole or in part on the debtor's inability to pay the full amount of a debt within a reasonable time, VA will obtain a current financial statement from the debtor showing the debtor's assets, liabilities, income, and expenses. Agencies also may obtain credit reports or other financial information to assess compromise offers.

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